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ABSTRACT

This report outlines the European Union's Community Initiatives for Citizenship Education Regionally Organized (CICERO) pilot project, its results, and suggestions for further action. It describes the participants from seven different groups at their first meeting in Barnsley, England, and each group's definition of what it would like European citizenship to mean in practical terms. Then, the opinions of two participants in the project are presented. Profiles of the groups from Liverpool, Dearne Valley, Belfast, Leeds, Castleford, Birmingham, and Oxford are then provided. The program for the 3-day intensive workshop in Brussels, November 26-28, 1996, is described. The following activities on day 1 are summarized: an introduction (Nick Blow) on the European Union and what citizenship means; an overview of the SOCRATES program (Angela Vegliante); presentation on education/training in Denmark (Inken Meinertz, Sven Solvig); visit to Conseil des Communautes Africaine en Europe; and presentations on programs for socially excluded groups, including Directorate General (DG) V (Frances Whyte), European Social Fund (Adeline Farrely), Helios Project (Roddric Skinner); and European Year against Racism 1997 (Tanya Lee). Day 2 activities included the following: meeting with Neil Kinnock, Transport Commissioner, and Stephen Hughes, Social Affairs Committee; meeting with the European Women's Lobby (Jyostna Patel); visit to Older Flemish Learners' Center; meeting with Tony Venables, European Citizen's Action Group; and DG XVI: Regional Development Meeting (Graham Meadows). The dialogue session on day 3 is followed by a list of outcomes from and aims and objectives of the CICERO Project. (YLB)

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CiCERO PROJECT

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION REGIONALLY ORGANISED

I welcome this report and the initiative we funded through the European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996.

In particular it was good to see a project that reached out at grass-roots level and invited people from excluded groups to come to the heart of Europe and its decision-making.

This was a dynamic group, of diverse ages and ethnic backgrounds, with whom I had a lively dialogue in Brussels.

I know many of them had never been abroad before. Many also had no sense of themselves as 'European' but this began to change during this project and I believe a new dimension of experience and learning was opened up.

I wish CICERO well for the future.

Jimmy Jamar

European Year of Lifelong Learning Co-ordinator
DGXXII Brussels

Introduction

What does it mean to be a citizen of Europe? Especially if you feel excluded from most forms of decision-making, through work or education.

CICERO was conceived as a way of giving people with least access to power and authority a real voice within a European context. It was about drawing on their life experience and wisdom to shape education and training policy for adults; giving them the tools to understand citizenship in the UK and Europe and then share their insights with others in their communities.

The 'pilot' was funded by the European Year of Lifelong Learning.

There was enough money to bring together a unique combination of unemployed adult learners from different areas; Liverpool, Leeds, Birmingham, Belfast, Yorkshire (Dearne Valley & Castleford), and Oxford.

All the CICERO participants are adults beginning a journey back into learning. Some are starting to study again after years of exclusion from education, some are widening their choice of curricula, all are discovering the joy and confidence learning brings.

The groups met first in October '96 at Northern College, Barnsley.

There were 42 people on a two-day residential course learning how 'Europe' works and researching issues of social exclusion. Representatives of these groups, 18 in all, travelled to Brussels in November '96 for a five day study tour, sharing the trip with members of WEA, Yorkshire South.

Conclusion

This unique and innovative project, in bringing seven groups of unemployed and excluded people directly to the centre of decision-making in Europe has taken a practical step towards defining what it means to be a citizen of Europe.Participants, activists in local communities hungry for such information have learnt about Europe, its institutions and funding regimes. They have had an experience of going to Brussels and meeting other excluded groups as well as policy-makers. A dynamic network of people within the UK committed to opening doors for others has been created.

The Jean Monnet group of Experts report, "Crisis or Opportunity" (1996) stated"social exclusion is endemic. It endangers the social cohesion both of the member states and of the Union..... a vicious circle of exclusion sets in, for example, among the long term unemployed and those without educational qualifications".

The CICERO project has taken a step in combating such exclusion and given its members a new confidence and a voice to use, in Europe and at home.

This report outlines the CICERO pilot project, its conclusions and suggestions for further action. As much as possible, it uses the words of the participants themselves. It will hopefully be a useful resource for others and a way of continuing this exciting and unique learning project.

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First Steps to Europe

CICERO participants from seven different groups came together for the first time at Northern College near Barnsley. It was a two day intensive introduction to each other and to Europe. The aim was to give an overview of the main Brussels institutions and understand something about who is included and excluded from the rights to be a European citizen. Firstly, people wrote their 'learning diaries'. These explained what learning and life-skills they have gained and what they hoped to achieve within the project CICERO. Jane Pillinger, Northern College Tutor then explained the structures of the Commission, Parliament, Council of Ministers and other bodies influencing policy at European level. The library was used extensively to research statistics on groups such as unemployed people, minority ethnic groups, women, people with learning and other disabilities. It was clear that citizenship rights are available or used by few of these 'excluded' communities through barriers of language, access, racism, lack of training or child care. This led to each of the groups defining what they would like European citizenship to mean in practical terms:

Liverpool

- A network for unemployed people providinginformation on skills and job opportunities across Europe
- European studies in schools
- Standardisation of qualifications like NVQs

Dearne Valley

- Access to lifelong learning for all
- Information on benefits for all excluded groups but particularly women
- Information on funding from Europe easily accessible

Belfast

- Affirmative action on womens' jobs
- More vocational training linked to actual jobs
- Addressing the issue of ID cards
- Making MEPs answerable at local level

Leeds

- Equal rights for minority groups
- Addressing unemployment as a priority
- Exchanges with groups across Europe for language and cultural learning

Castleford

- Lifelong learning, especially for elderly people
- Standardisation of accreditation
- Monitoring the role of the media in spreading racism and exclusion of groups such as the deaf

Birmingham

- European level Commission for Racial Equality
- More funding for and accreditation for lifelong learning
- Core curriculum on European Studies across the EU

Oxford

- Provision for carers at home
- Networks across EU for adult learners
- Information on funding at local level

"Formed wonderful friendships not only with colleagues of the WEA but also with people from other organisations, ethnic backgrounds, throughout the UK and Ireland. A wonderful learning experience."

Participants in the Project

Profile - Joe from Leeds

Joe from Chapeltown in Leeds learned about CICERO and was keen to be involved. Many years spent training in the arts and theatre had finally brought Joe to Thomas Danby College in Leeds to study English A Level. His decision to stay in Leeds rather than seek career opportunities in London was partly about a commitment to the north and to its excluded communities. Working with young people in particular, he saw the potential of drama to empower people.

When he came to Northern College he wanted more information about Europe. The concept of being a citizen of Europe was strange to him, as to many of the participants since they hardly felt themselves to be citizens of the UK, let alone Europe. After 2 days at the college, Joe understood more about the structures of decision making. In Brussels Joe was looking for ways to bring links and information back and relate it to his existing skills. Finding out about the European Year Against Racism '97 was important but most profound was the afternoon and evening spent with the inspiring migrant African group. Their independent and vibrant response to enormous difficulties impressed the whole CICERO group. "It opened my eyes. In the UK we spend so much time moaning instead of celebrating the positive things about who we are. Why not celebrate and get on with using our talents as black people to create something better? That's what I've learnt today." said Joe. At the final session of the study-tour, with Pauline Greene, MEP and Jimmy Jamar (EYLL), Joe gave one of 3 presentations on behalf of the group, powerfully summarising what CICERO would like to see from Europe, i.e. to include all sections of all communities, using learning as a tool for people to take an active part in Europe.

"The irony is that here in Brussels we have felt more included than we ever do at home," he said.

Profile - Mary from Oxford

"I know I don't know anything but I just wanted to say"...

began Mary as she proceeded to give an insightful summary of the difficulties most adults face when they start formal or informal learning, many years after school. Mary was one of the Oxford group - from Ruskin College. Years spent at home looking after children, then an ageing parent, had sapped all her confidence, yet her intelligence shone through. She had just started on the 'Return to Learn' course at Ruskin and was enjoying it immensely. It reminded her of skills she'd used whilst working many years previously.

She was delighted at the chance of going to Brussels to learn more about Europe. She set herself specific targets from the Brussels visit, i.e.

- To investigate what other countries do about social exclusion of carers at home of the elderly or disabled. How could the carer be enabled to carry on with their education whilst caring and return to the workplace without the stigma of 'lost years.
- To investigate the possibility of establishing an educational network across Europe
- To investigate possible funding for Ruskin to run courses with a European content

Later in Brussels, Mary met Glenys Kinnock, MEP one of her heroines and the author of a pamphlet she'd recently read. When she was told that Glenys hadn't met anyone else who'd read the pamphlet Mary's confidence took another leap.

Profile of Groups

Dearne Valley WEA

A group of women from 'the Dearne' decided to form their own branch of the Workers Education Association having completed the Combined Studies courses provided by Rotherham WEA. The Dearne, an ex-mining community of South Yorkshire has high rates of unemployment; almost 1 in 3 adults are on benefits. The women, mainly mothers with children had lived with feelings of "no hope" for years and saw education as a way of finding a future. The branch, now run locally, provides a range of courses - from creative writing, playgroup skills, literacy and computer studies, to yoga and languages. A crucial element is free childcare, enabling women - and lone parent men - to participate fully.

Fircroft Adult Education College, Birmingham

The group are all members of the 'Working With People' course run by the college. It began as a new course teaching skills to community activists. CICERO participants all had immense experience of working in local groups, the Bangladeshi Youth Association, after-school clubs, churches and tenants organisations. Inspired by what they have learnt group members have now set themselves up as a community organisation 'Working With People' so as to keep their skills within the community and avoid the classic 'professionalisation' which draws people away into higher education. Their first priority is to set up homework centres for children and their parents.

Liverpool Community Rights

The Community Rights Organisation set up a Community Learning Network in the city, part of which is a European Network involving grass-roots organisations and their volunteers in community regeneration. Participants in the network were keen to learn more about the European Union, how its institutions and political systems work since Liverpool has the crucial 'Objective 1' status. As well as bringing millions of pounds into the city this initiative has sought to involve local groups in decision-making and bidding for resources. The CICERO project has uniquely met their need for understanding Europe by giving them residential courses, then the first hand experience of Brussels, which has given them enormous confidence to share their experiences and new understanding with other grass-roots organisations in the city.

Castleford Womens' Centre

In the aftermath of the 1984 Miner's strike a group of ex-miners' wives in Castleford, West Yorkshire began to campaign for more learning facilities in the area. They set up a centre which has since been named the 'University of Life', reflecting the extraordinary range of courses and training available from its limited premises in the town centre. Over 1,000 women per year now use the facility, supported by the free childcare facilities available.

The centre has recently been recognised by the University of Leeds as a centre for external degree courses.

Devastated by the loss of jobs in the area, the Centre is now looking for practical ways to create 'real' training linked to new jobs in such industries as tourism, leisure and culture. The Brussels visit provided crucial contacts and ideas for developing some of their initiatives.

Ruskin College, Oxford

The group are all adult learners, recently attracted back to learning through the Ruskin Learning Project. The 'Changing Directions' and 'New Directions' courses at the college give unemployed adults the opportunity to get study skills and to cover an exciting range of courses including English and writing skills, practical and social economy. There is an emphasis on encouraging active debate about crucial issues facing society. In this context the opportunity for members of the group to visit Northern College and Brussels added an exciting dimension to the studies. Much information has been passed back through this active group to other in the college, such as the Agewell group. Links with Europe will continue through planned exchange visits and participation in CICERO nationally.

"It became apparent during our visits that the truth is out there but how do we the Citizens of Europe access it? "As a result of the visit I now see myself as a citizen of Europe and I will do my best to pass on the information and learning experiences of the EU."

Thomas Danby College, Leeds

The Leeds group, African-Caribbean members of the Chapeltown/Harehills community in Leeds were drawn from the college. As adult returners to 'A' level courses they all had a particular interest in learning more about Europe from the point of view of excluded communities. Active in different local organisations, from arts to youth, community, they were conscious of the lack of information about Europe, training, job and funding opportunities provided through the EU. They particularly wanted to explore what European citizenship could add to the lives of black communities in the UK.

Women into Politics, Belfast

Founded in 1994 by the Downtown Women's Centre, the project reaches out across N. Ireland to women's groups that have been at the forefront of grass-roots activism throughout the period of political conflict.

The project has been able to organise cross-community political discussion in both loyalist and nationalist areas during a time of worsening political circumstances. It has organised taster sessions, area based discussions and political education classes in seven women's centres, attended by over 100 women. Practical skills based training such as negotiation skills and dealing with the media have been organised in 5 areas. The three women, from different communities, joining the CICERO project, were keenly aware of double exclusion from Europe - as women and as citizens of Northern Ireland. They were determined to make links and bring back information to gain more resources for their work.

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THE BRUSSELS PROGRAMME - TUESDAY 26th NOVEMBER

Introduction by Nick Blow

Citizenship means:

Rights

Freedom of movement

Freedom to study

Freedom to work anywhere - if you have means to support yourself, if qualifications recognised

If self-employed - to set up business

Freedom to retire anywhere - if you have own pension

Freedom to die anywhere!

Right to stand for election in any of the 15 member countries

Right to vote

Right to diplomatic assistance in any country

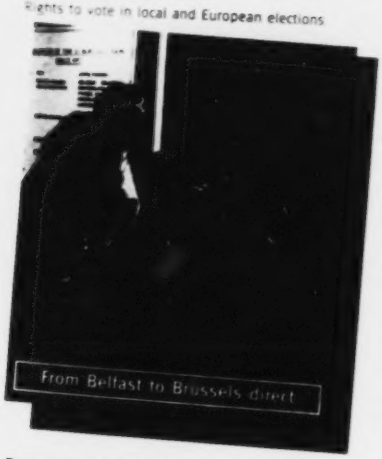
Right to issue of passport (if lost) by any of the 15 member states

Develop citizenship

Equal opportunities

Citizens have rights but also in return must have responsibilities.

Rights to vote in local and European elections



From Belfast to Brussels direct

European Commission (20 members)

Right of Initiative

Executive Power

Guardian of the Treaties ("Police Force")

European Parliament

Political Power. Legislative Power. Budgetary Power

Council of Ministers

1 minister per Member State

The European Council

Weighted voting in the Council

Issues watered down to get agreement from all member states

Blocking minority of 26 out of 87.

The Brussels visit gave people an insight into Europe through meetings at 3 levels:

- EU officials, policy-makers, such as Graham Meadows, Director of Regions for UK, France and Germany, Jimmy Jamar, Head of European Year of Lifelong Learning and senior politicians such as Neil Kinnock, Transport Commissioner and Pauline Greene, MEP, Leader of the majority Socialist Group in Parliament.
- Non-Governmental Organisations such as the European Women's Lobby and Danish Trade Union officials from the European TUC.
- Community organisations such as the Communautés Africaines de Belgique (African Migrant organisation of Belgium) and Flemish adult learners.

SOCRATES (DG XXII) - Angela Vegliante

AV gave an overview of the SOCRATES scheme which now encompasses several actions previously free standing. The main thrust was Education, from Schools (Comenius), Languages (LINGVA) to Adult Education. The new Vademcum was referred to and copies made available. The other major programme, LEONARDO, a training programme of various actions, was also described.The SOCRATES programme had begun in 1995, with the new Adult Education schemes offered for the first time in 1995 (9). This strand aims to support the development of a European dimension into AE, networking, curriculum development, and discussion on how the EU works. It has a very wide scope and is open to all AE providers. AV recognised that the AE sector was "enormous and complex".

70 projects have been funded so far under the programme. They fall into 2 broad bands.

1. projects to promote active citizenship embracing themes such as health, racism, nationalism, producing materials for trainers and students;
2. a smaller group of projects concerned with improving the education systems access, motivation etc.

AV commented that there was a very wide difference between the Nordic group of Member states and the southerly ones. The former was more informal with well developed pathways into learning. Britain's system was particularly well developed.

Moving southwards the Systems became more formal and less flexible with a major concentration on the school systems and very little outside.

DG XXII sees the links between AE and the Labour Market. There is a committee set up to study the links between LEONARDO and SOCRATES activities. Deadline for the next round would be February 1st 1997. The staff of the Technical Assistance offices would evaluate bids and pass on to a SOCRATES Committee. The DfEE would advise. Successful bids would start in August and run for up to 3 years. Grant intervention rates varied up to 80%. Bids with a North-South range of partners would be favoured and Broadcasting was felt to be useful (CD ROM felt to be a little overplayed!). Problems in securing Partners would be assisted by national agencies such as European Association for AE who ran a database service; NIACE was referred to as a key agency. The EU White Paper on Teaching and Learning was referred to strongly. There would be 60 projects this time (70 last time).

AV favoured use of TV and video: "down stream" learning technologies which gave greater access to excluded groups. Distance learning with tutorial support felt to be desirable. - **Ted Hartley WEA**

Education/Training in Denmark

Summary of presentation by Inken Meinertz and Sven Solvig, Danish Trade Unions, ETUC.

The greatest social challenge facing Europe at the end of this millennium is that of unemployment/employment. In countries of the European Union over (18) million people are registered as unemployed. In spite of, relatively, comprehensive efforts in the battle against unemployment, more and more people are added to the increasing numbers of excluded groups, trapped, in an unemployment spiral which alienates (those without work) from the labour market. Economic inactivity often leads to electoral inactivity - a threat to the stability of Europe and, indeed, democracy itself. The scheme is company-based. Employers commit themselves to a nominal training target of say five per cent of their workforce over five years. The amount of training per worker might vary from one month, to one year. The whole idea underlying the scheme is that while an individual is away from work on a course, an unemployed person takes on the job temporarily and is trained in situ. Thus, two people are trained at the same time, the original worker upgrades his/her skills, the unemployed person receives proper, practical and relevant on the job training. Both become better qualified, more confident etc.

Courses range from basic (core) skills to professional and degree/post graduate levels.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR	MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Introduced separate laws for employed people wishing to undergo education/training for up to two (2) years.	Set up I.V.T. (Schools for Innovation Vocational Training) Adapted schools to educate/ train people with business and/or technical objectives.
Set up Labour Market Centres (CVT) in towns of over 30 thousand population for use by unemployed people.	Set up Adult Training Centre for elementary training and teaching languages.

At local level, the **JOBROTATION SYSTEM** is organised by local Trade Unions Training Agency and other local bodies. All training is designed, monitored and evaluated by this committee - including those customised for individual companies.

Requests for Jobrotation places come from three different sources: **(1)** A company nominates worker for upgrading course; **(2)** Unemployed person requests vocational course and **(3)** Unemployed person is "offered" vocational course after three 3 month period of unemployment - or after 9 month period is "forced" to accept offer or obtain employment within a certain time period. The penalty is loss of state paid benefit.

The Danish belief is that learning is a lifelong journey for all vocational training a lifelong necessity for the economically active.

For more information contact:

Secretariat, Amallegade 45A, DK8600, Silkeborg. Denmark
Tele: +45 8680 6977 Fax: +45 8680 6970
e-mail eujob@eujob.dk
- Brian Walsh, Liverpool Community Rights

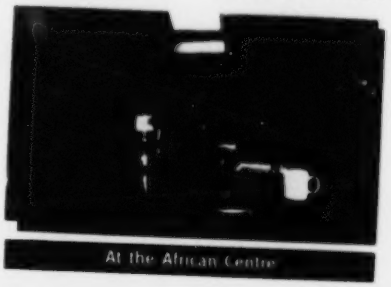
Visit to Conseil des Communautés Africaine en Europe.

Background

The organisation was formed in 1991 as a result of a meeting of migrant groups. It also has a base in France, and a seat on the EU migrant forum. There are currently 27 member organisations from all over Belgium. Its main objectives to promote the cultural, economic and political well-being of migrants in Europe.

The Agenda

Most people felt this was one of the highlights of the week. The warmth of the welcome and the variety of activities was



At the African Centre

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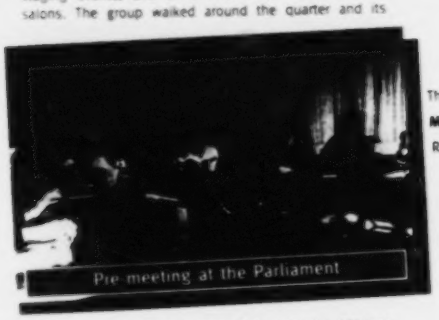
overwhelming. Suzanne was our host initially, and made everyone welcome. Translation was provided by Julia, Roger Barton's assistant, from Cologne, and Abu who represents "Truth". Frances did an admirable job of speaking in French on behalf of the group.

Several members of the migrant organisation were represented; "Truth", "Light", ("Moingaza" in Swahili), an African Women's Group which also included Brazilian, Phillipine and Asian women, a Zairian Women's Association, and "MIIA" which is a combination of 2 members, from the French and Flemish - speaking quarters.

"Truth" make t-shirts, "Light " tells children fairy tales, the African Women's group operates on a largely social basis, the Zairian Women's Association runs courses in accounts, bakery and farming, and "MIIA" helps both those wishing to return to Africa and those wishing to integrate into Belgian society. There followed a discussion on the difficulties presented by having 3 national languages French, Flemish and Dutch depending on the region (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels etc.) for people wishing to be integrated into society. In spite of this, the organisation has achieved notable successes, particularly through the EU forum, most notably the insertion of racism as a common EU problem in the main text of the Maastricht Treaty, whereas initially it had merely been inserted in the Annex. Abu spoke about the difficulties in obtaining political asylum in Belgium, for instance it can take up to 5 years for people to obtain employment even though they have been granted asylum. Those granted asylum are given a "newspaper" identity. There was a brief opportunity for some of the WEA/CICERO group to introduce themselves before visiting MATONGE the African quarter. MATONGE is a major cultural town in Zaire, recreated in Brussels, housing cafes, African music shops, staging events, and an extraordinary number of hair salons. The group walked around the quarter and its



Pre-meeting at the Parliament

shopping centres, before visiting "Maison Africaine", home for 35 years to African students for up to no placements. The next visit was to "Les Enfants De place", an organisation which supports migrant children and their families. It helps integrate children into Brussels, and provides a link between parents and schools. Parallels were drawn between the disproportionate number of minority group schoolchildren expelled in Belgium and the UK.

On display were some remarkable toys made by children in Zaire from coathangers and other recycled materials.

The group then went to Chantiers Afrique for a meal of "Pondu" (Kassava leaves), chicken drumsticks in a peanut butter sauce, Moabe" (fish in a palm nut sauce), plantain bananes", doughballs and assorted drinks, to be joined by latecomers who had followed the smell of good food from the other side of Brussels.

Finally, Marc gave a breath-defying demonstration of African percussion instruments. Everyone then had chance to play the instruments, which included a kalabas (a small drum played upside down on water), a little box made from a sardine tin with metal strings which were plucked, a Turkish cymbal, and a bamboo shield with couscous inside which when turned upside down made a noise like running water. We left feeling the warmth of an African welcome and a determination to stay in contact as there is so much to learn across our geographical divide.

Contact: **Suzanne Monkasa/Meike Van Meulder**
CCAB Tel: 00 32 2196325 Fax: 0032 2196561

- ***Chris Morgan, Vonef, Leeds***

Directorate General V: employment, industrial relations and social affairs

A series of presentations on programmes for socially excluded groups including ESF, disability and the European Year Against Racism. Frances Whyte, information officer for DG V gave an overview of D G V, which is one of the largest DG's with workers based both in Brussels and Luxembourg.

Points covered:

1. the single act of 1985, gave a new competence of health and safety in the workplace this resulted in the "working time" directive.
2. the social charter is aimed at preventing citizens' social rights being abolished.

> **"One thing that comes to mind is the flemish adult learners' group these people were all elderly people who were still willing to learn instead of being left behind and forgotten "**

Future plans:

1. parental leave directive
2. new treaty, enlarging the social charter to include:
   - citizens right to employment and education
   - employment clause
   - clause against discrimination in any form

Adeline Farrely - ESF

Gave overview on European Social Fund (ESF)

ESF targets:

1. improving access to and the quality of education and initial training
2. adapting the workforce to changes by promoting continuing training
3. anticipating labour market trends and training requirements
4. boosting human potential in the fields of research, science and technology
5. developing a set of measures which forms a pathway to integration for those exposed to long term unemployment and exclusion from the labour market
6. promoting equal opportunities between men and women.

There are 3 different ways to access funding:

Mainstream (90%) 6 different objectives.

Regional objectives:

objective **1** (46%) - areas with less than 90% of the community GDP

objective **2** (17.8%) - areas of severe industrial decline

objective **5b** (12%) - rural areas

objective **6** (0.4%) - areas of low population density. Horizontal objectives, apply to the EU as a whole:

objective 3 (27.4%) - focussing on women, long term unemployed and youth objective 4 (4.9%) - assisting companies threatened with closure to adapt/retrain the workforce.

Community initiatives (9%):

1. To fund programmes proposed by the commission.
2. Foster innovative policy developments related to ESF goals:
   - that have a particular impact at community level
   - that are transnational.

Other actions (including innovative measures):

Roddric Skinner - Helios Project

There has been a community action project called the "Helios" Project running from 1993, due to finish in December 1996.

As a result of the project a new disability strategy was adopted in July 1996, it set out 6 concrete actions:

1. mainstreaming of EU policies
2. co-operation of member states
3. encouragement of NGO's (non governmental organisations)
4. strengthen employment policy
5. use potential of the information society (IT etc.)
6. harnessing of structural funds.

The common task is one of valuing and making space for human diversity. This is everyone's business in a peoples Europe that values fairness as well as efficiency."

Tanya Lee - European Year Against Racism 1997

There are 6 main objectives for the year:

1. to highlight the threat posed by racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism
2. to encourage reflection and discussion on measures to combat the above
3. to promote the exchange of experiences on good practice
4. to disseminate information on such good practice
5. to make known the benefits of integration policies implemented at a national level
6. to turn to good account wherever possible the experience of personsactually affected or likely to be.

The success of the year will be reliant on the willingness of the member state to take it on board.

The year has a budget of 4.7 million ECU, there will be a call for tenders for projects in January 1997.

The national co-ordination committee:

Ms Julie Clouder, Community Relations Unit, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate London SW1
Tel: 0171 2732969 Fax: 0171 2733771

- ***Neil Drew, Sheffield***

WEDNESDAY 27th NOVEMBER

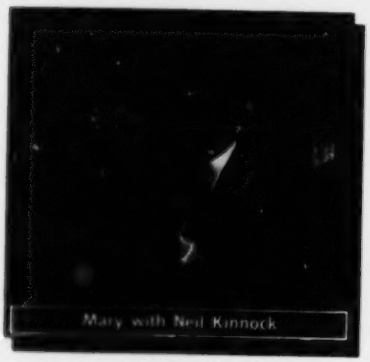
Meeting with Neil Kinnock, Transport Commissioner & Stephen Hughes, MEP.

Neil's address was inevitably cut short by the pressure of the French truck-drivers strike and the need to make a statement to Parliament. He did, however, offer his support and commitment to the aims of CICERO and to the WEA. Having been an adult education tutor at one time, he was convinced of the power of learning in enabling people to gain access and control of their lives, making a fuller contribution to their communities.

He encouraged us to use our rights as citizens of the UK and Europe and to question the media account of Europe.

Stephen Hughes, Chair of the Social Affairs Committee; the committee responsible for ESF funding, said that only 9% of community initiatives are organised directly from Brussels. National and local governments have a key role to play - and thus can block initiatives.

The Committee is also responsible for advising on legislation including the Social Chapter. The Essen agreement was a commitment to tackle unemployment through vocational training and lifelong learning via a series of measures. Fifteen million ecu would be made available this year (97) to kick start the 'third sector' eg



Mary with Neil Kinnock

co-operatives and self employed people.

The Committee is particularly keen to build bridges between the Commission and citizens of Europe, creating a 'Civil Dialogue' especially through the voluntary sector. There will be a series of conferences organised around this theme by the UK's NCVO, Emma Baker, with which we were encouraged to engage.

He also said that delays in funding could be shifted within 24 hours if direct contact is made with his office.

Frances Homewood, CICERO

> **"We sat and listened to the Parliament work, well some of them did my knob dropped off my earphones and I tried to sit there looking interested and fiddled with my knob and I fetched it home as a souvenir memory of how Parliament works"**

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Meeting with the European Women's Lobby

Speaker; Jyostna Patel, Researcher Background

The European Women's Lobby was founded in September 1990 as a response tothe lack of representation of women at all levels in the European Community. The EWL is the largest co-ordinating body of national and European non governmental women's organisations in the European Union and it fulfils 4 functions:

- It conveys the opinion of its members to politicians and officials at the European and national levels to ensure that women's concerns are heard and understood by those taking policy decisions.
- It serves its members by providing information about European policy which may directly affect the lives of women in the European Union. It is a networking base which helps national and European groups to communicate among themselves.
- It assists in the development of transnational campaigns.

Structure

The EWL is broad based and has 3 levels of membership:

1. National membership i.e. national umbrella groups such as the London based National Association of Women's Organisations.
2. European membership such as the European Forum of Left Feminists.
3. Non-voting membership, that is, organisations subscribing to receive information.

Each EWL Member State is entitled to 4 delegates elected by the co-ordinating bodies of national organisations.

Activities

Its work is shaped by issues at the European level.
Its remit is to follow draft legislation but it is also concerned with innovation.
An example of the EWL's activities is the Black and Migrant Women Project: "Confronting the Fortress". The project was established because it was recognised that the General Assembly lacked representation from black women.
Human rights also figure high on the agenda eg the EWL recently issued press releases on the situation of women in Afghanistan.
The 2 most significant bodies for the EWL at a European level are:

- the Committee on Women's Rights and
- the Equal Opportunities Unit at DG5

The EOU is responsible for overseeing all the equality aspects of all programmes in terms of policy and implementation. Additionally it recommends the level of funding for the EWL.

Citizens of Europe

Maastricht

Understandably, the NGOs and others were in uproar because of the lack of consultation about Maastricht.
The direct consequence of this has been that the EU has been keen to communicate better with its citizens.
The Women's Lobby has set up its own "Reflection Group" to consider the implications of Maastricht and to make recommendations to guide the process. This Group, consisting of legal experts, academics and activists, has met three times and presented its recommendations to the Board which in turn has elected 12 priority issues for consideration at the IGC on the revision of the Treaty eg:

- the integration of equality as a fundamental right
- the revision of Article 119 on Equal Pay for Equal Work to "work of equal value".
- Challenging racism and xenophobia
- to accord NGOs consultative status in the EU

> "When I first heard that I was going to Brussels I was very worried I would not be able to go as for the last ten years I have not gone out on my own."

Planning Ahead

- The EWL is seeking funding from the Citizens First" initiative to hold a NGO Women's Forum on the IGC
- Follow-up work on the UN conference in Beijing is a priority
- The establishment of a European Centre on Women and Human Rights is planned encompassing
  - an observatory on violence against women
  - an advisory group
  - opportunities to examine legal instruments in detail
  - a Steering Committee with an international focus on the impact of conflict and war vis a vis refugees/migrant women

It was noted that a new budget line has been introduced to deal with violence against women, adolescents and children.

Contact:

General Secretary, Barbara Helfferich
European Women's Lobby, Rue du Me ridien, 22
B-1210 Brussels Tel: 32221790 20 Fax:32221984 51

Kal Nawaz, Sheffield City Council

Visit to Older Flemish Learners' Centre:

Christus Stein very kindly agreed to talk to us about their work. The centre is a social, cultural and welfare organisation for the minority Flemish speaking elderly in Brussels - interestingly there is no similar organisation for French speaking Belgiums. The centre runs courses on an enormous range of cultural subjects, such as Literature and History, as well as Arts and Crafts such as Drawing and Painting and Sports such as cycling tours, ball games, Tai-Chi-Chuan and gymnastics. We were very impressed by the huge range of courses and activities. Where possible, tutors are drawn from the group and they obviously have a good number of retired teachers/lecturers to call on. We were particularly interested to find out that, as well as these social and cultural subjects, the centre also runs welfare-based courses such as 'Memory-training', 'Dealing with emotions/feelings' and runs programmes to help those caring for people with Alzheimer's and organises sheltered housing, peer visiting schemes etc. As well as the Centre that we visited, there is a network of around 20 community centres in Brussels serving the needs of the elderly in their particular area.

> "The quality of information exchange while we were in Brussels made me very enthusiastic for the future of the CICERO project. I embarked on CICERO with an entirely open mind not really sure what it was about or what to expect in Brussels. On returning and reviewing what went on I think that the subsidiary and citizenship issues are vital to the project and for people. I also think with regard to Education in Community and Adults forming links throughout Europe would be fantastic aim for CICERO to work for."

After speaking to Christus, we were invited to sit in on Ros Falvey's English lesson and were able to meet and talk to some of the class members. They seemed interested in coming to Oxford next spring and we have agreed to liaise with Ros over accommodation - places to visit etc.
They would be able to meet and perhaps form links with the Agewell Group at Ruskin.
This was a useful visit from the point of view of finding out about similar organisations of our own and of possibly forming links for exchange of ideas and visits.
Their address is: **Centrum Derde Leeftijd, Visverkopersstraat, 1314 7th Floor, 1000 Brussels.**

Rosie Martin, Ruskin College, Oxford

Meeting with Tony Venables, Director, European Citizen's Action Group

ECAS gives funding advice through their European Advisory Funding Service Office. They help access ECUs, or soon to be Euros, for non government organisations. The bulk of the money, approx. 90%, is project money. Many of the projects are very sophisticated. They are trying to make available a Micro Project fund so people can access smaller pockets of money. ECAS are trying to organise this so they can help smaller organisations such as ourselves.

> "It would have been nice to hear the views from a bigger cross section of the European Union."

ECAS also give advice on making your voice heard. They are also experts on lobbying European issues and that was the reason for them setting up in the first place. There are 10,000 lobbyists in Brussels. Structures need to be in place to make lobbying effective. They help group people from different countries together to make their voices bigger.
As regards citizens rights in Europe they have had a lot to do with the Citizens first Programme which started 26 November 1996. The UK has opted out of this programme which deals with and addresses the problems of citizens rights across Europe. There is no sign of a big governmental push towards a Bill of Rights for citizens. The idea has been squashed, only the Germans showed any interest. Certain clauses may be added to the Mastricht Treaty such as Human Rights, Racism, Sexism and Sexual discrimination bills but only in sections, not as a whole citizen rights in the European Treaty. ECAS give advice on the free movement of people in Europe for work or other purposes but the laws that are in place do not cover casual work. They say that jobs should be posted in Job Centres so whole families can up and move to find work, and in doing so not affect their health and pension rights which they do at present. Countries are still scared of people moving to claim the highest amount of benefits eg. to Denmark, but figures show that out of 370 million people only 5.5 million are living in other member states. They think that soon people will be able to move abroad to work for one year with no paperwork and no penalties on movement of Social Security, Healthcare and private pension scheme. Also talked about was the news of three month visa free travel for members who signed the Schengan Agreement. These countries are Benelux, France and Spain. Italy, Sweden and Denmark have signed but it has not been implemented yet. Again the UK opted out. There is also a project for NGOs to move freely across

Flying the flag - Liverpool, Leeds, Belfast and Sheffield

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borders and ECAS would be able to point people in the right direction to find European partners from a database of 4000 addresses. And finally we were asked if we would be interested in a summer school, to get together and form partnerships with NGOs from other countries, covering such topics as Social Fund Training and discussions on Citizens' rights. Tony Venables would be interested to hear from us.

Tel: 00322 254 80490

Simone Bellandini, Castleford Women's Centre

DGXVI: Regional Development Meeting with Graham Meadows

Graham Meadows, in charge of DGXVI's operations in UK, France and Germany, began by stressing the importance of overcoming problems with the funding regime; 'of getting things done'. Increasingly, the Commission recognised the need to involve local communities directly. As a result, they were changing the way aid was deployed, to make funding more flexible and to ensure it helped to develop the capacity of communities to get things done.

Some examples:

- they had been encouraging local representation on monitoring committees, following the Merseyside example, a trend which would be strengthened by the regionalisation of ESF objective 3 funding
- they were keen to see technical assistance for local capacity building for economic development (see the report on Social Exclusion and Economic Development produced by prof. Peter Lloyd's team at Liverpool University's Geography Department)
- they would like to see more local people with expertise on European funding able to help communities learn the (Eu) ropes.

A useful development which might be eligible for EU technical assistance would be e-mail links between communities. Set against their flexibility in interpreting and applying the rules, DGXVI did have three inflexible rules:

1. money intended for particular communities must be spent in those communities
2. there had to be watertight boundaries to priority areas to underpin the above
3. programmes must be locally designed.

Graham Meadows, Tel: 00322 295 6181 Fax: 00322 296 6296

Martin Yarnit

THURSDAY 28th NOVEMBER

Dialogue session with Pauline Greene, MEP, Roger Barton, MEP and Jimmy Jamar, Head of European Year of Lifelong Learning.

Jimmy Jamar explained that many themes have been chosen over the years
Year of Cancer Awareness
Year of Elderly
Year of Cinema, etc
20,000 people had been surveyed within 18 countries on their attitudes towards education. Of these;

- Had done no training/learning within the previous year.
- There is a growing gap between school and the workplace
- Restructuring of work.

> "We then heard about 'Citizen First' initiative to tell people what being a European citizen is all about. This is launched today but we will not hear anything about it as the UK is not taking part."

Changes are taking place. We can no longer assume that life will be categorised as follows:

- Education
- Work
- Retirement

People need to be prepared to retrain and update their educational qualifications skills throughout their lives. There are problems with illiteracy throughout Europe. The "Information Society" may create further inequalities.

Neil Kinnock meets the Fircroft group

> "The visit to the African migrant community as well as meeting and socialising with people in the group from other ethnic backgrounds provided me with valuable learning experiences. In my area we have little racial diversity."

There are: Demographic changes; Early retirement; People living longer; Social effects.

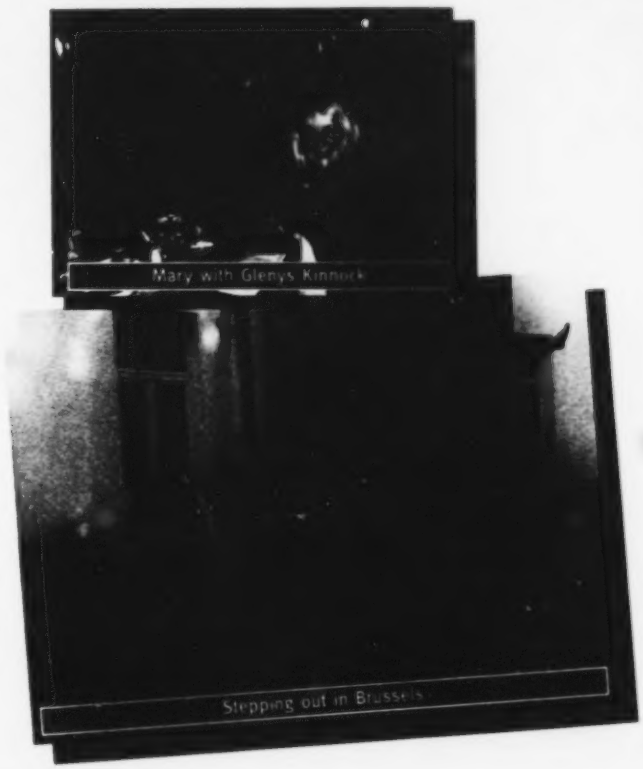
How can skills be accredited ie the lifeskills people attain?

Pauline Greene, MEP -
Leader of Socialist Group in the Parliament

- 18 million unemployed within the European Union
- The reasons have changed
- Problems of structural organisation
- Fighting for development of Welfare States within the E.U.
- Striving for peace
- Citizen First - an initiative to bring information to citizens at grass-roots level
- Battling against the media trying to get information to the UK.

Presentations were given by CICERO members, Ian Williams, Rosie Martin and Raja Chowdhury.

Shiela Smith, Dearne Valley WEA



Mary with Glenys Kinnock

Stepping out in Brussels

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OUTCOMES FROM THE CICERO PROJECT

- An impressive commitment to continue CICERO with its networks of unemployed and excluded groups, has been forged through the 'pilot' phase. Further funding is now being sought.
- Personal links made with policy-makers at European level continue and will be strengthened by a further, shorter study-tour to Brussels in April '97, which will include CICERO participants.
- Ruskin College intend to run courses on Europe as part of their 'Return to Learn' programme. The Oxford 'CICERO' group plan a dayschool in which they will disseminate information gained through the project.
- A national Steering Group has been formed with representatives from all seven local groups. MEP's and local council officials are being invited to join as honorary members. Three of the seven groups have formed local 'CICERO' branches ie Oxford, Liverpool and Birmingham's 'Working With People' group.
- The whole group is committed to organising a major event to celebrate the European Year Against Racism, including the Birmingham group's own community play about exclusion. The Dearne Valley group intend to stage an event in Barnsley, S Yorkshire - a predominantly white area.
- The Liverpool group are organising a conference, about gaining access to Europe, involving their local MEP. Other CICERO participants will be invited.

- Naomi from Leeds plans to take up a student research placement within the European Women's Lobby in Brussels, Summer '97.
- Trans-European contacts are continuing; the Belgian African migrants organisations has become a partner with CICERO in a Socrates bid; VONEF (Voluntary Action Funding Network) have partnered with an African organisation in Hull as a result of the Brussels visit; Ruskin College are inviting Flemish Adult Learners to visit, Summer '97.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE CICERO PROJECT

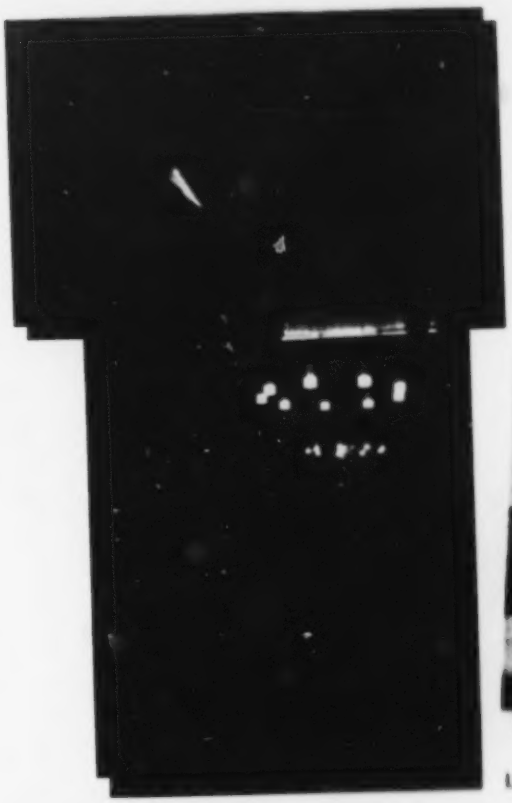
(Community Initiatives in Citizenship Education Regionally Organised)

Aims

- To raise awareness of and develop European citizenship at a community level.

Objectives

- to empower individuals and groups within local communities through creating learning opportunities about Europe, democracy and citizenship.
- To use lifelong learning as a way of challenging social exclusion and lack of job opportunities. To take particular account within this of the needs of black and Asian people, women, older people and those with disabilities.
- To create a network of groups at community level within the UK and across the European Union, exchanging information and experience of creative learning opportunities for adults. In particular, to find innovative learning projects on citizenship issues.
- To work towards creating employment opportunities for people as community capacity builders/animateurs within their own localities on Europe, democracy and citizenship; thus empowering others to use their rights and access to the full.
- To work in partnership with Colleges, Universities, local government, voluntary sector organisations, trade unions and the media to further these aims.



Learning about Europe at Northern College, Barnsley.

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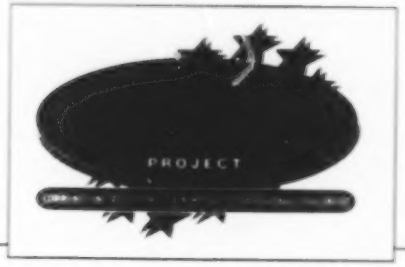

THE FUTURE

CICERO is now being established as a permanent organisation in the UK and establishing transnational partnerships.

The ultimate objective is to see opportunities for learning and citizenship given to excluded groups across the whole 15 member states of the European Union.

If you want further information, or membership for your group, please contact:

FRANCES HOMEWOOD - Project Coordinator

CICERO, Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 2GG.

Tel: 0114 282 3215 • Fax: 0114 282 3150

WORKERS EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION • YORKSHIRE SOUTH DISTRICT
CHANTRY BUILDINGS • 6 - 20 CORPORATION STREET • ROTHERHAM S60 1NG

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